

VZCZCXYZ0004  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDM #4974 2901255  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 171255Z OCT 06  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2072  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6319  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4134  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2718  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7321  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1336  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4700  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0915  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//  
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7051

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 004974

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND AFERNANDEZ,  
IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Post-war Maneuvering, MEPP,  
Palestinian developments, (10/13 -10/16)

11. Summary: The Syrian press covered (October 13 - 16) the  
following topics:

President Assad met with Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel  
Moratinos on Sunday. Papers quoted Moratinos as saying that "Syria  
is part of the solution rather than the problem."

President Assad held an Iftar on Sunday at which he gave a speech to  
Syrian clerics, calling on them to confront the distortion which  
Islam is encountering, through dialogue and wisdom.

In a meeting with the head of the Political Department of the  
Palestinian Liberation Organization, Farouq Qadoumi, President Assad  
stressed the importance of Palestinian national unity and the  
continuation of inter-Palestinian dialogue to achieve the ultimate  
goals of the Palestinian people, mainly ending the Israeli  
occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state with  
Jerusalem as its capital.

President Assad also met with Egypt's Intelligence Chief, Omar  
Suleiman, who delivered a letter from Mubarak dealing with  
"bilateral relations and developments in the region."

Papers also covered a meeting between the Palestinian Minister of  
Interior and his Syrian counterpart, who renewed Syria's support for  
Palestinian national unity.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

President Assad to clerics: The responsibilities which Syria holds  
is an honor for her (government-owned Tishreen, October 16, 2006)

President Assad reviews with Moratinos the situation in the region,  
Syrian-Spanish relations and the European vision regarding launching  
the peace process (government-owned Tishreen, October 15, 2006)

President Assad receives a letter from President Mubarak about  
bilateral relations (government-owned Tishreen, October 16, 2006)

Moratinos: Syria is part of the solution; no peace without her

(government-owned al-Baath, October 16, 2006)

President Assad reiterates to Qadoumi the importance of resuming dialogue and enhancing Palestinian national unity (government-owned Tishreen, October 16, 2006)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

-----  
"Bush's Comma"

-----  
"So long as the US Administration uses this discourse, and so long as President Bush considers what is going on now in Iraq as a mere comma in Iraqi history, the series of setbacks and curses shall haunt the current US Administration until its last day in office, and shall hit its members with something worse than Gulf War Disease after they leave office.

"How can a human being believe...that the lives of 650,000 Iraqis are a mere comma, when Iraqi history is written. Mr. President, when, then, is life valuable?

"The problem of President Bush's Administration, with itself and its people, is that it does not want to admit the faults that it has committed and is planning to commit in the Arab region, especially regarding Iraqis and Palestinians.... Blair's Government, a US ally, has started to learn from what has happened and is preparing itself to correct its mistakes, as its Military Chief said a couple of days ago. Still, this change will not save Blair's government from setbacks and curses, which will continue to follow it until its last minute."

Corbin